

B-17 Flying Fortress

The Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress was a World War II bomber that was used for daylight bombing raids over Europe and the Pacific. The powerful four-engine, low-wing, 31.62-m-span (103.75-ft) monoplane, with its five defensive machine-gun positions, represented a significant advance in bomber evolution. The prototype made its first flight on July 28, 1935. It was an all-metal design with a circular-section fuselage, wings embodying a deep root section equal to half the fuselage diameter, and large wing-mounted flaps. The fuselage bomb bay accommodated a 2,177-kg (4,800-lb) offensive load.

The B-17E was able to attain a top speed of 510 km/h (317 mph) at an altitude of 7,620 m (25,000 ft). It incorporated various improvements, including an enlarged tail to improve stability, power operation for three gun turrets, a tail turret, a ventral "ball" turret, and use of 0.50-in machine guns throughout, except for a 0.30-in caliber pair in the nose. The greatly improved B-17G represented the ultimate form of the B-17 and was produced in greater number than any other variant.

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